



# STATE OF MINNESOTA

## Office of Governor Mark Dayton

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

January 31, 2018

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senate  
302 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tina Smith  
United States Senate  
309 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tim Walz  
United States House of Representatives  
2313 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jason Lewis  
United States House of Representatives  
418 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Erik Paulsen  
United States House of Representatives  
127 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
United States House of Representatives  
2256 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Keith Ellison  
United States House of Representatives  
2263 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Emmer  
United States House of Representatives  
315 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson  
United States House of Representatives  
2204 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Nolan  
United States House of Representatives  
2366 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of the Minnesota Congressional Delegation:

Minnesota's Community Health Centers (CHC) provide crucial health, dental, and mental health services to our Minnesotans and are a vital component of our state's strong healthcare safety net. CHCs serve more than 180,000 patients regardless of their ability to pay at more than 70 sites across Minnesota. Sadly, Congress has left long-term federal funding for this program in limbo since last fall, wreaking havoc on a system that serves some of Minnesota's most vulnerable families.

Community Health Centers have been shown to improve health, reduce healthcare costs, and provide access to Minnesotans who otherwise would have nowhere to turn for health care other than a hospital emergency room. Many CHC sites in Greater Minnesota are the only provider for miles around that delivers care on a sliding fee scale.

Minnesota receives \$38 million per year in CHC funding from the federal government. With Congress extending federal funding for this program only until the end of March, the potential \$27 million cut means many Minnesota CHCs are in a dire financial position, preparing to send layoff notices and scale back services with effects that can and will be felt statewide. For example, a CHC in Greater Minnesota is being faced with multiple site closures, limiting access for 2,500 patients and potentially laying off up to 45 staff. This funding uncertainty could not come at a worse time: this provider has seen at least a 15 percent increase in the total number of patients served in 2017 compared to 2016. Furthermore, a CHC in Minneapolis will have to reduce their Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) for patients seeking help for their opioid addiction. As key partners in addressing our state's opioid crisis, no provider should be scaling back life-saving services during this critical time amidst a terrible epidemic. Additionally, the healthcare workforce that provides care at these sites is facing a lapse in employment, causing anxiety and worry for Minnesota families. Such funding instability makes it difficult for CHCs to hire and retain needed staff.

Minnesota's health care safety net has faced an enormous amount of uncertainty over the past year. Such as the attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act, a four-month lapse in authorization for the Children's Health Insurance Program, more than \$807 million in proposed cuts to federal funding for MinnesotaCare, and Congress' failure to reauthorize CHC funding. I urge you to take a step toward providing certainty for Minnesota's health care safety net by reauthorizing CHC funding as soon as possible. No Minnesotan should experience an interruption in their care as a result of a partisan disagreement in Washington, and our healthcare workforce that serves CHCs should be rewarded for their important work, not receiving layoff notices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Dayton". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "M" and a cursive "Dayton".

Mark Dayton  
Governor